

Study says majority of world's population faces religious restriction

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Researchers combed through 16 primary sources -- including reports by the U.S. State Department and **the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** -- and rated countries by 20 indicators of government restriction and 13 markers of social hostility.

The study counted 64 nations with high or very high restrictions on religion. That is about one-third of the countries in the world. Because some of the most restrictive countries are very populous -- like China, India and Pakistan -- however, seven out of every 10 people live in a country with high restrictions on religions.

The highest overall levels of restrictions are found in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran, where both the government and society at large impose numerous limits on religious beliefs and practices.